ACTION COMICS

闇鍵師 3

[原作]申島かずき
(劇団☆新感線)
[作画]赤名 修

双葉社

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魔を鍵に封じ込める。それを、〝施り〟と言う!!

海に流れ着いた記憶喪失の女が持っていた鍵は、"人魚の涙"の鍵だった。そこは、"江戸城の扉"であるという……。この鍵を狙う、強大な魔物、牙颯丸。牙颯丸の正体と目的は!?

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海に流れ着いた記憶喪失の女が持っていた鍵は、呉服屋・大丸の土蔵の鍵だった。そこは、"江戸城への扉"であるという……。この鍵を狙う、強大な魔物・牙鳳丸(がほうまる)。牙鳳丸の正体と目的は!?

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YAMIKAGISHI 3

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第17話◎秘錠の密偵4
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE THE LAST TIME WE MET FACE TO FACE.
SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD DROP BY, AND HERE I AM.
神
.....
.....

JOUNO-SUKE.
WHATEVER BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE IN DAIMARU?
YOU SAW ME?
I'M THE HEAD OF THE IGA NINJAS, REMEMBER?
.....
.....

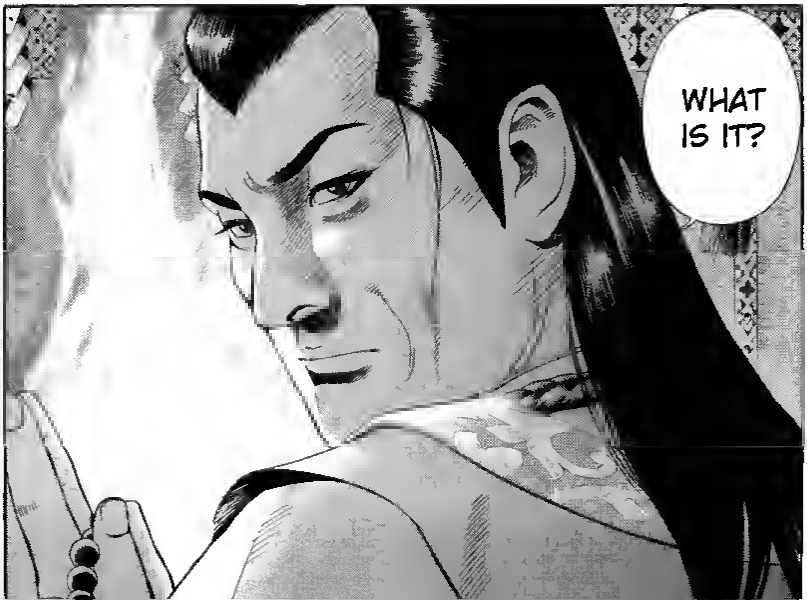
I THOUGHT MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE THIS BACK.
WHAT IS IT?
A KEY.
!

CERTAIN-LY YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH IT, HATTORI-SAMA.
COULD YOU RECOGNIZE THIS GIRL IF YOU SAW HER?
...I SEE.
YES.
GUESS THERE IS NO POINT IN FEEDING A KEY SPECIALIST A LINE OF BA-LONEY ABOUT A KEY...
WHERE DID YOU FIND IT?

ALRIGHT.
HATTORI SHINZOU HAS MADE UP HIS MIND.
SA-TSUMA SHINOBI .....
AND SINCE YOU ALSO HELPED IN THE TETSUGAJU NO TACHI AFFAIR,
I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU WHEN IT COMES TO EDO'S PRO-TECTION
THOSE SHINOBI COME FROM ANOTHER PROVINCE.
PROBABLY SATSUMA.

TN: MORE BUDDHIST PRAYERS
ON BASARA ARATANNOU ON TARAKU SOWAKA.
NOUBO AKYASHA-GYARABAKA ON ARIKYA ARIBORI SOWAKA.

FORGIVE ME FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR PRAYER.
ISSHIN-SAMA.


WHAT IS IT?

NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF. I'VE RUN INTO MORE TROUBLE THAN I EXPECTED.

KYOUZOU HAS RETURNED, AND HE HAS BROUGHT UKIHA BACK WITH HIM.
I SEE.

KYOU-ZOU, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LEG?

.....JI-ROUTA-DONO WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.
ONLY UKIHA WAS THERE?
YES SIR.
IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO REPORT?
SHE WAS HIT ON THE HEAD AND COULDN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHO SHE WAS
WHEN I ASK-ED HER, SHE SAID THAT AFTER THE FIGHT WITH THE EMPEROR'S INNER GARDEN WATCHER,
MY APOLGIES.
SUCH A FAILURE IS UNWOR-THY OF A SATSUMA SHINOBI.

NEVERMIND MY LITTLE BROTHER.
WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR NOW IS THE KEY.
I RECALL JIROUTA-DONO AND I TAKING DOWN THE GUARDS AND GETTING AHOLD OF THE KEY.
...I JUST CAN'T TELL.
WHAT-EVER HAP-PENED AFTER THAT
UKIHA.
DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT JIROUTA-DONO?
WHAT!!
I LEFT THE KEY WITH THE PEOPLE WHO SAVED ME.
WELL .....
WHAT IS IT?

I'LL DO IT EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE.
THEY ARE NO ORDINARY CITIZENS.
THEY WERE GOOD ENOUGH TO CAUSE A MASTER LIKE KYOUZOU TO LOSE HIS LEG.
I WON'T FAIL TO RECOVER THE WATCHER'S KEY, I ASSURE YOU.
THEY ARE JUST ORDINARY TOWNSPEOPLE.
MY DEEPEST APOLOGIES.
FURTHERMORE, I THINK I HAVE GRASPED A CLUE REGARDING THE KEY.
LET'S HEAR IT.
OH, YES?

DAIMARU STORE, IN THE OODENMA DISTRICT.
YOU MEAN THE STORE?
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS!
?
PFF
PFFFFT

LEADER!!
!
スッ
.....
.....

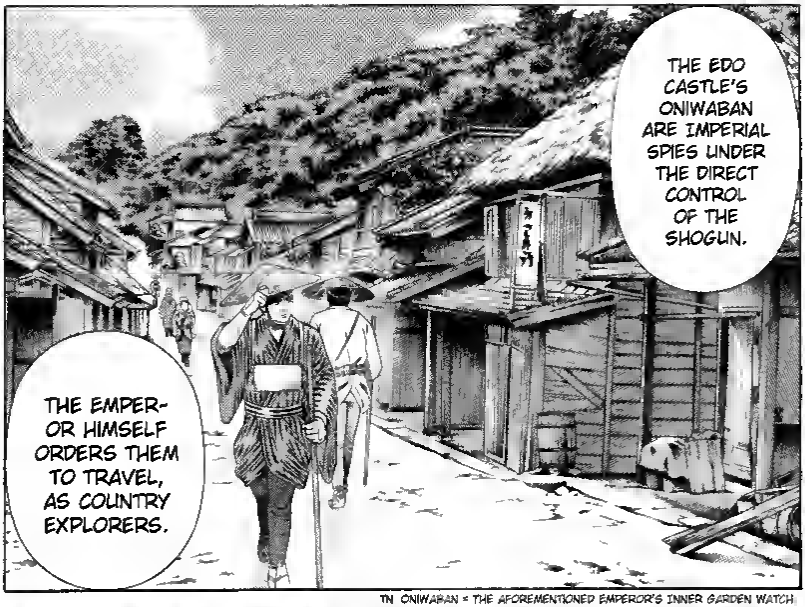
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
GAHOU-MARU-SAMA.
IS-SHIN.
HOW COULD YOU NOT NOTICE ?

THE DAIMARU DRAPERIES STORE IS A PURVEYOR FOR THE SHO-GUNATE.
WHAT SHE SAYS DOES MAKE SENSE.

.....
.....
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS CASE PERSO-NALLY.

LISTEN
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU IS TOP-SECRET. CLASSIFIED IMPERIAL SPIES INFORMATION.
SPEAK OF IT TO ANYONE ELSE AND YOUR LIFE IS FORFEIT.
!
THE SATSUMA SHINOBI ARE SEEKING A WAY TO INFILTRATE EDO CASTLE.

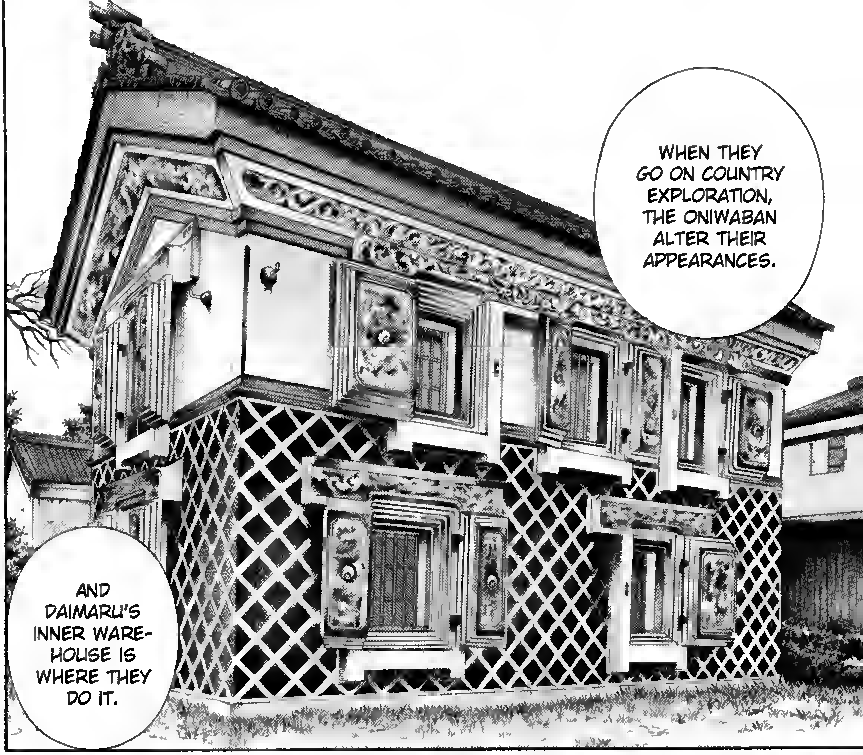
HATTORI-SAMA, JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN EXACTLY?
IT'S A STORE-HOUSE FOR THE ONI-WABAN.
?!
"DOOR TO THE EDO CASTLE".
DAIMA-RU'S INNER WAREHOUSE IS THE ONE AND ONLY

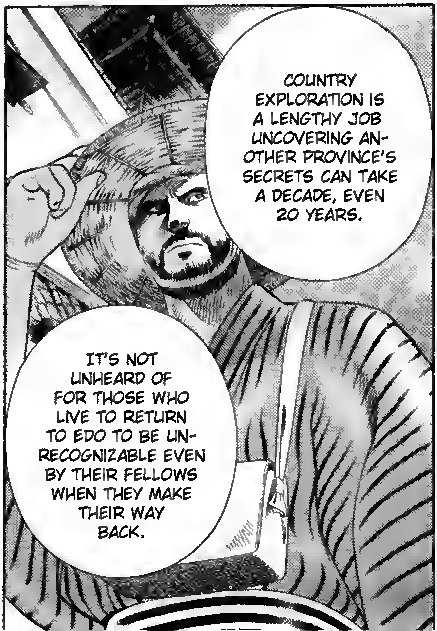

THE EDO CASTLE'S ONIWABAN ARE IMPERIAL SPIES UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE SHOGUN.
THE EMPEROR HIMSELF ORDERS THEM TO TRAVEL, AS COUNTRY EXPLORERS.

TN: ONIWABAN = THE AFOREMENTIONED EMPEROR'S INNER GARDEN WATCH.

THE ONIWABAN ARE IMPORTANT OFFICIALS, ACTING AS THE EMPEROR'S EYES AND EARS.
TN: IN THE EDO PERIOD, POLITICAL MIGHT RESTED IN THE HANDS OF THE SHOGUN WHOSE SEAT OF POWER WAS THE EDO CASTLE. THE EMPEROR WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A RELIGIOUS FIGURE, LIVING SECLUDED IN HIS PALACE IN KYOTO, AND IN THE NAME OF WHOM THINGS WERE DONE.

THE SHOGUN RESIDES IN THE EDO CASTLE.
SO HE CAN'T GET A GOOD GRASP OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD AT LARGE JUST FROM LISTENING TO HIS ELDER COUNCIL AND THE REST OF HIS ENTOURAGE.

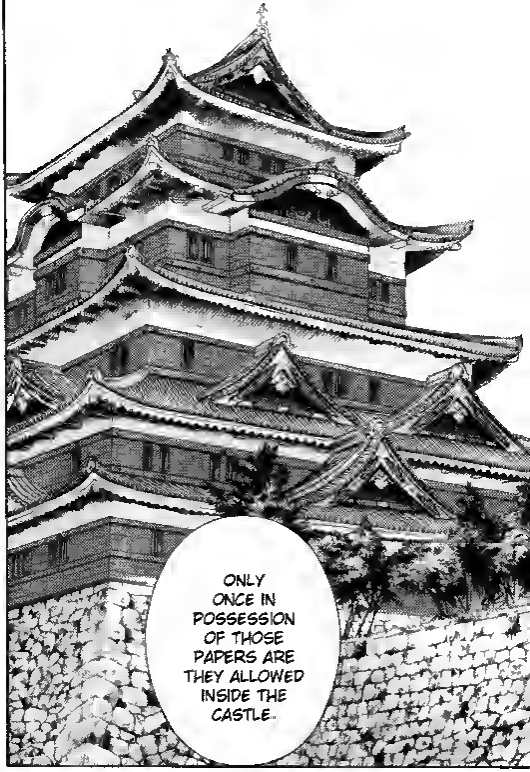

WHEN THEY GO ON COUNTRY EXPLORATION, THE ONIWABAN ALTER THEIR APPEARANCES.
AND DAIMARU'S INNER WARE-HOUSE IS WHERE THEY DO IT.


COUNTRY EXPLORATION IS A LENGTHY JOB UNCOVERING AN-OTHER PROVINCE'S SECRETS CAN TAKE A DECADE, EVEN 20 YEARS.
IT'S NOT UNHEARD OF FOR THOSE WHO LIVE TO RETURN TO EDO TO BE UN-RECOGNIZABLE EVEN BY THEIR FELLOWS WHEN THEY MAKE THEIR WAY BACK.

IT'S AN OLD, WELL-ESTAB-LISHED DRAPERIES STORE WITH A LOT OF CIRCULATION, AND NO SHORTAGE OF FINELY-CLOTHED PEOPLE
A PERFECT PLACE TO DISGUISE ONESELF.

THERE IS ANOTHER STORING ROOM IN DAIMARU FOR TIMES SUCH AS THIS.
THE DOCUMENTS ASCERTAINING THEIR IDENTITIES ARE STORED INSIDE.
ONE KEY TO THE WARE-HOUSE'S DOOR, ANOTHER FOR THE STORING ROOM.
I SEE. I WAS WON-DERING WHAT THE SECOND KEY WAS FOR.

I SEE. NOW I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY DAIMARU'S INNER STORE-HOUSE BEING THE DOOR TO EDO CASTLE.


ONLY ONCE IN POSSESSION OF THOSE PAPERS ARE THEY ALLOWED INSIDE THE CASTLE.

ALTHOUGH RECENTLY, THE SATSUMA PROVINCE HAS BEEN ACTING IN A SUSPICIOUS WAY.
I'VE BEEN NOTIFIED ABOUT A FACTION LED BY MASTER SHINOBI, WHO'S MADE IT'S WAY INTO EDO.

YEAH.
FORTUNA-TELY, NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN THROUGH THE DECEPTION YET.

EVEN A SHINOBI FROM ANOTHER FIEFDOM WOULD BE ABLE TO IMPERSONATE AN ONI-WABAN AND GET INTO THE CASTLE PROVIDED THEY HAVE THE PAPERS.

A FEW DAYS AGO, AN ONIWABAN ON HIS WAY BACK FROM SATSUMA REPORTED FROM AN INN IN KODAWARA, AFTER WHICH CONTACT WAS PROMPTLY BROKEN.
THIS KEY HERE PROBABLY BELONGS TO HIM.
.....
.....
WE'VE TOLD THE GIRL ABOUT THE KEY'S CONNECTION WITH DAIMARU.
IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BY NOW.

AND THAT IS WHERE YOU COME IN. I HAVE A REQUEST FOR YOU.
.....
.....
IN ADDITION, THE OTHER SIDE'S ALSO MADE A MISTAKE.
LEAVING THE KEY TO US AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE THEY WENT THROUGH TO GET IT.
INDEED.

17TH TALE: END

第18話◎秘錠の密偵5

HERE?
THIS IS DAIMARU, GAHOU-MARU-SAMA.
HMM...
I SEE. THE STORE IS EVERY BIT AS LARGE AS THE RUMOR DESCRIBES IT.

WAH
HIC

I HAVE GRAVE NEWS, MASTER.
A FIRE'S STARTED IN THE INNER STOREHOUSE!
WHAT ?!
!

A BIG FIRE STARTING FROM DAIMARU WOULD SHAME US FOREVER!
MAKE IT DISAPPEAR WHILE IT IS STILL SMALL
YOU MEN. GET THE CUSTOMERS OUTSIDE!
THE OTHERS TAKE CARE OF THE FIRE, QUICKLY!

!
THIS IS THE ONLY STOREHOUSE WITH GUARDS BEFORE IT.
.....
.....
THERE CAN BE NO MIS-TAKE.
THIS STORE-HOUSE IS THE VERY ONE WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
I SEE. I GUESS THAT'S IT, THEN.

IT'S EXACT-LY AS UKIHA SAID.
ギュッ
HERE?
THE DOOR TO THE EDO CASTLE.
ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO GATHER SOME KIND OF CLUE HERE IN DAIMARU?

I SHALL TAKE YOU FORWARD
ON THE WAY TO THE EDO CASTLE.
DAIMARU'S STOREHOUSE IS THE PLACE THE ONIWABAN USE TO DISGUISE THEMSELVES.
A FAIRLY AUDACIOUS MOVE.
BUT THE TOKUGAWA'S 200 YEARS OF TRANQUILITY HAVE MADE WAY FOR NEGLIGENCE.

I HAVE SOME-THING TO REPORT.

UKIHA.
I NEED YOU TO SEARCH THEIR LIKELY DESTI-NATIONS AND THE ENVIRONS THOROUGHLY

MY APOLOGIES

THE BLACK-SMITH HAS DIS-APPEARED, AND THE KEY WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

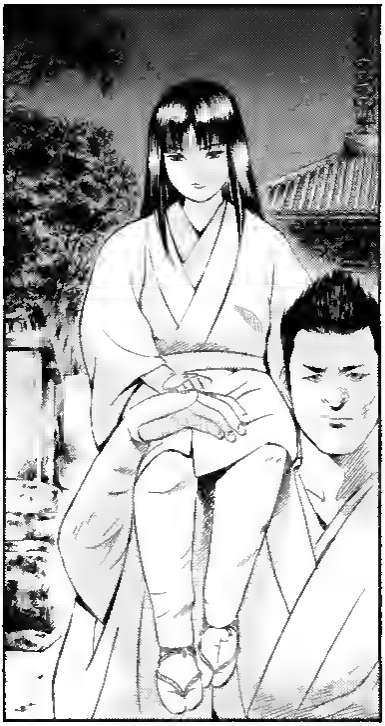
THEY MIGHT COME RUNNING WHEN THEY HEAR ABOUT THE DISTURBANCE.
YES SIR.
KYOUZOU, YOU STAY HERE WITH ME.
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THEM ON SIGHT.
I'LL GO WITH HER, THEN.
I RECKON IT WAS NO USE NO MATTER.
WE'VE SEEN THROUGH THE TRICK.

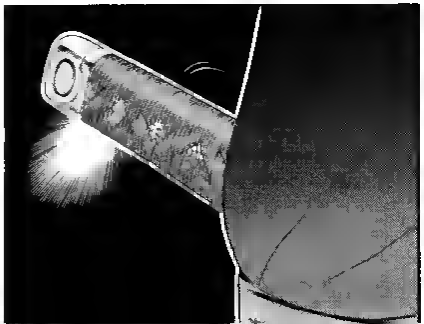
HUMPH.
COMING UP WITH SOMETHING SO BOLD THE IGA CLAN'S LEADER DOES LIVE UP TO HIS NAME.

NOW TO DO SOME-THING ABOUT THAT KEY!
NOW TO DO SOME-THING ABOUT THE KEY!?

スゥ…
！

WHO THE HELL IS HE?!





THIS IS THE MAN I MET AT THE BLACK-SMITH'S.
GAHOUMA-RU-SAMA. THE KEY!!
THE SHINOBI FROM THE LAST TIME!
PLEASE WAIT HERE.
I'LL GET THE KEY BACK.

BUT
THAT LEG OF YOURS IS PUTTING YOU AT A DISAD-VANTAGE.
WAIT, KYOU-ZOU.

?
NOT TO WORRY.
I SHALL GRANT YOU POWER.

GGROOAAR

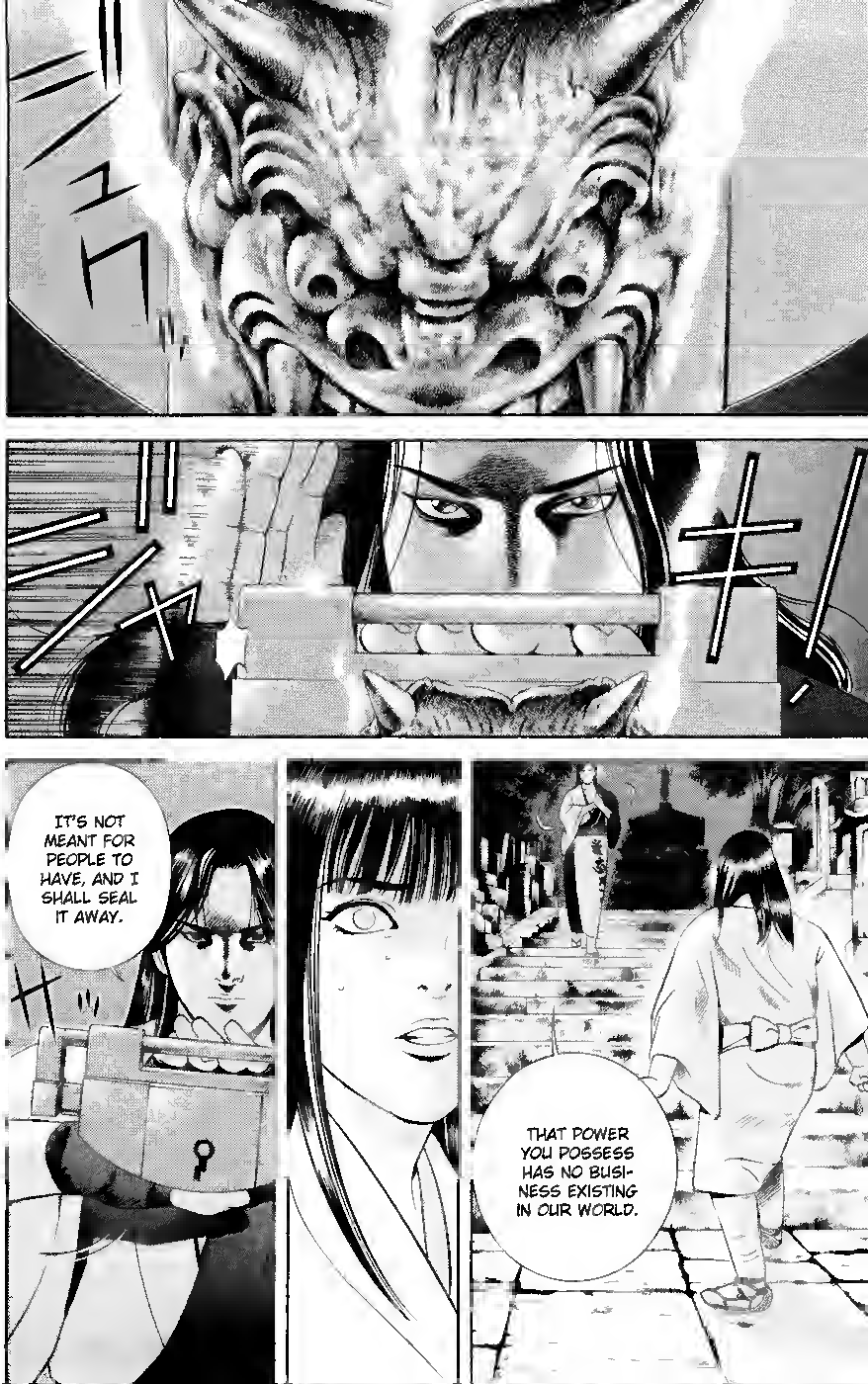
!!
オオオ
HE'S ABLE TO MANIPU-LATE EVIL AT WILL ?!

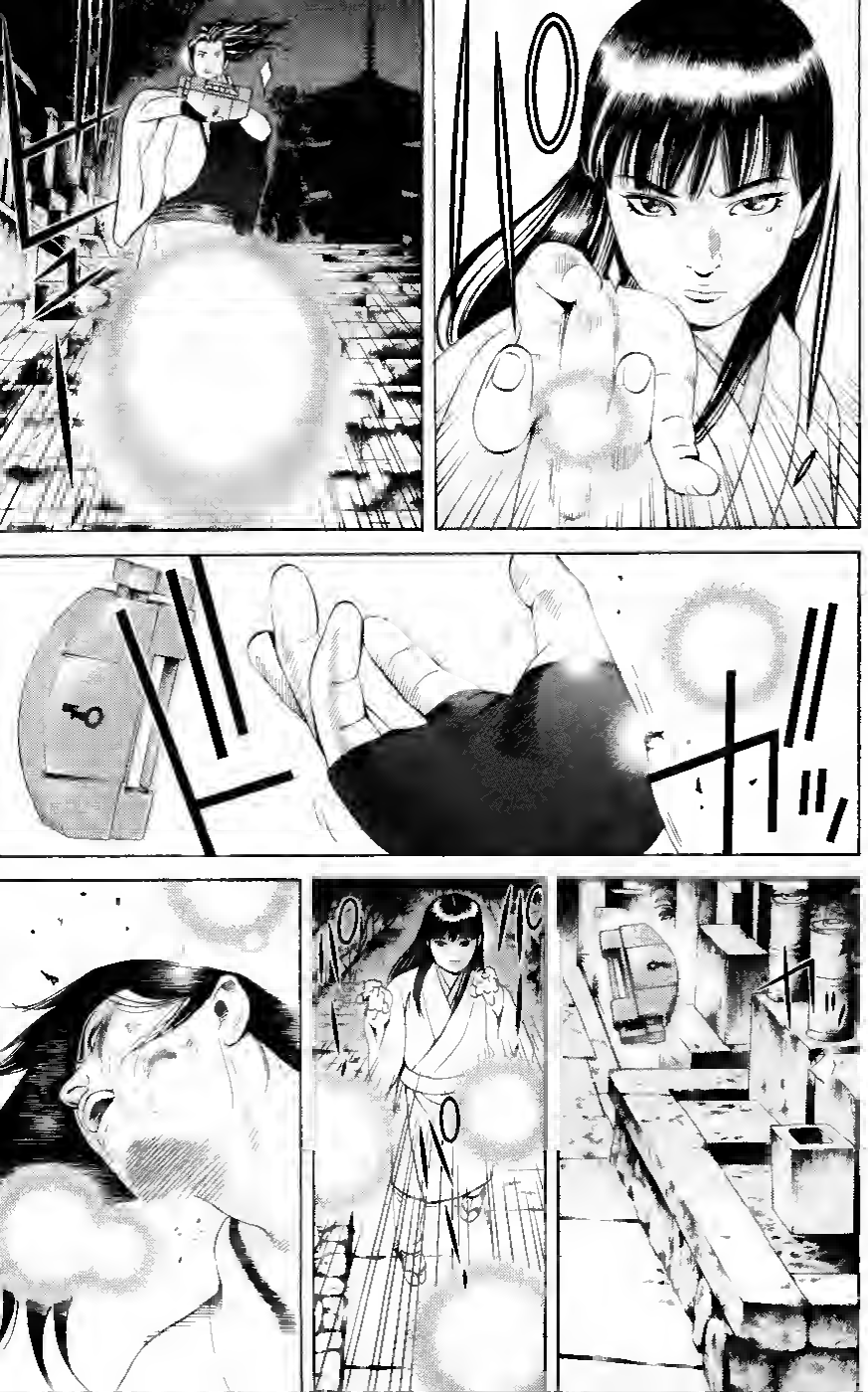
GO
!!

18TH TALE: END

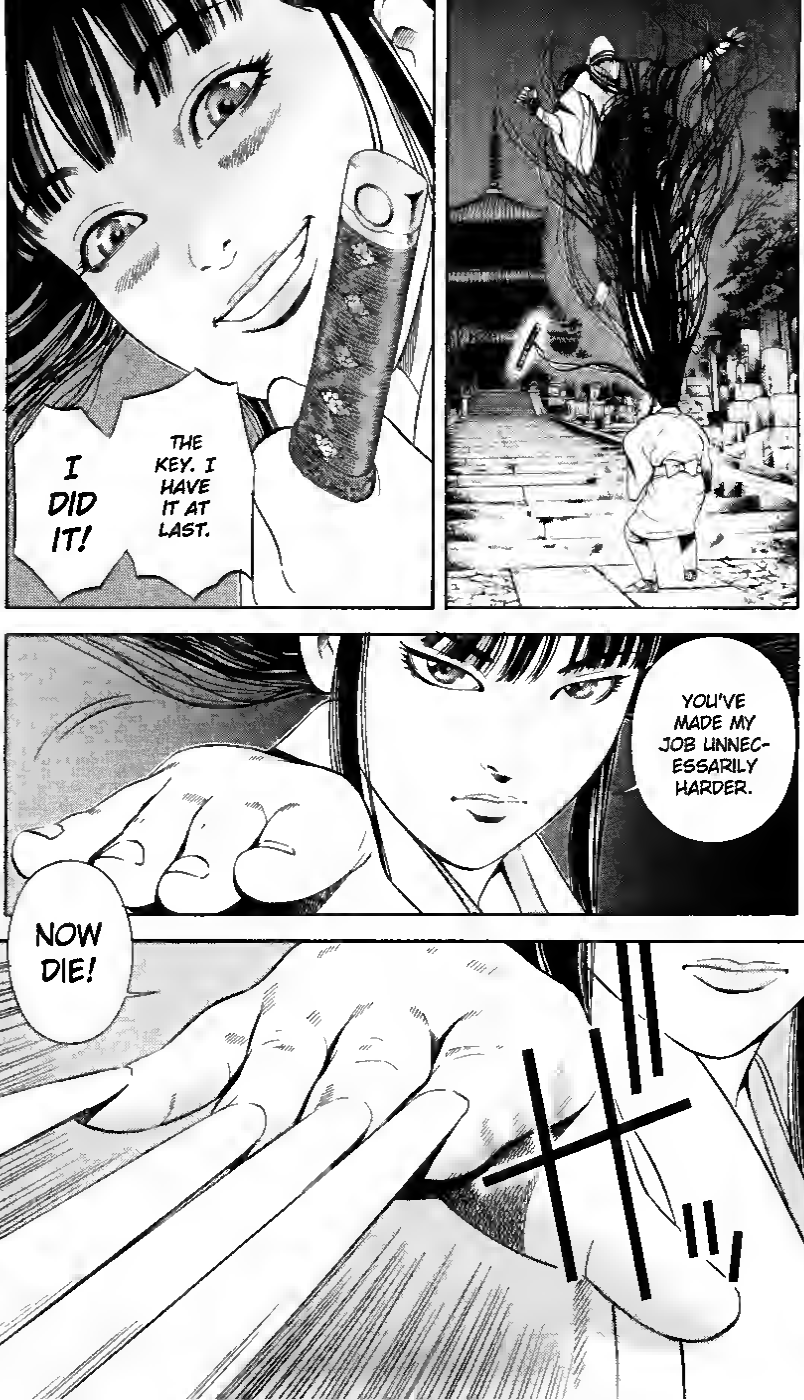
WHAT IS THAT POWER ?!
IS IT THE SAME AS MINE?!

I CON-
TAIN EVIL
AND SEAL
IT AWAY.
MY
POWER
IS NOTH-
ING LIKE
YOURS.
THIS IS
CALLED A
DOORING.


IT'S NOT MEANT FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE, AND I SHALL SEAL IT AWAY.
THAT POWER YOU POSSESS HAS NO BUSINESS EXISTING IN OUR WORLD.



ニュルル
!?


I DID IT!
THE KEY. I HAVE IT AT LAST.
YOU'VE MADE MY JOB UNNECESSARILY HARDER.
NOW DIE!

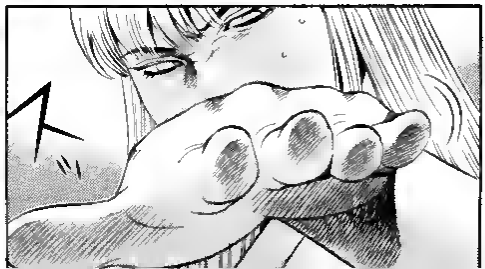
ッシュウウ…
?

WWAAHAAA

GASP
DAMN YOU. HOW DARE YOU.

A FIGHT !!
WE HAVE A FIGHT !!

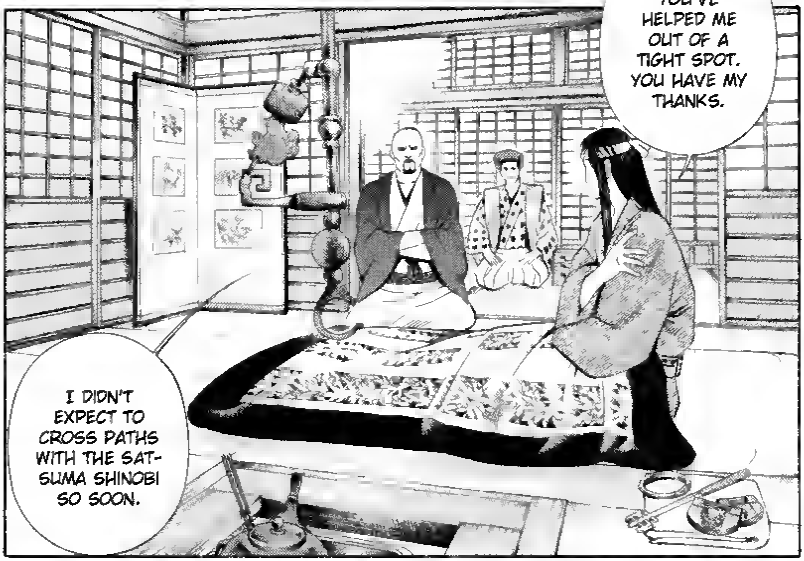
HOW DARE YOU.
HOW DARE YOU.



DAMN.
OVER THERE, QUICKLY.
WHERE? WHERE?
WHERE IS THE FIGHT ?!

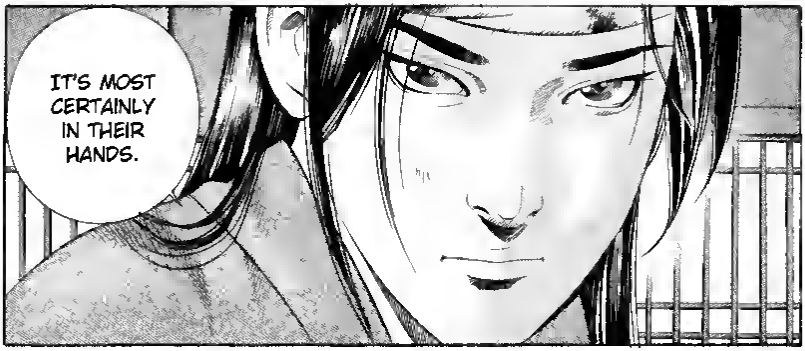
HEY, ARE YOU ALRIGHT ?

?


YOU'VE HELPED ME OUT OF A TIGHT SPOT. YOU HAVE MY THANKS.
I DIDN'T EXPECT TO CROSS PATHS WITH THE SATSUMA SHINOBI SO SOON.

I NEVER IMAGINED THE PEPPER SALESMAN WOULD BE ONE OF YOUR MEN, HATTORI-SAMA.
SHINJUUROU'S BEEN ABLE TO BRING YOU HERE, THANKFULLY.

NOW WOULD BE A VERY BAD TIME FOR THEM TO FIND OUT THERE'S A LINK BETWEEN YOU AND OURSELVES
I'M THE ONE WHO GAVE THE ORDER NOT TO INTERFERE UNTIL THE VERY LAST SECOND.
HE WAS FRIGHTENINGLY SKILLED, FOR A TODDLER.
YOU WERE WELL OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE, JOUNOSUKE-DONO.
YOU WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GET AWAY WITH RELATIVELY MINOR WOUNDS.
SO. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KEY?
FORGIVE ME.
CERTAINLY NOT. THERE'S NOTHING TO FORGIVE


IT'S MOST CERTAINLY IN THEIR HANDS.

IS THAT SO? GOOD.
THE BASTARDS ARE PLAY-ING NICELY INTO OUR HANDS.

I CAN'T.
TAKE THIS WITH OUR THANKS
JOUNOSUKE WE WOULDN'T HAVE SUCCEED-ED WITHOUT YOUR HELP

EH ?!
GET A-WAY FROM EDO FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD OVER IT, JOUNO-SUKE
YOU MAY NOT BE WITHOUT SKILLS, BUT ULTIMATELY, YOU'RE JUST A NORMAL CITIZEN.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY COME AFTER YOU.
THE SATSUMA SHINOBI HAVE SEEN YOUR FACES.
BUT
THIS MONEY SHOULD HELP COVER YOUR EX-PENSES
YOU GO, AND YOU TAKE O-KIN AND THE BLACKSMITH AWAY WITH YOU.

THE SHINOBI I MET TODAY WAS A HOST TO DEMONIC FORCES.
YOUR SUB-ORDINATES COULD DIE BY THE THOUSANDS AGAINST THAT CHILD WITHOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE.
AND I SHALL RE-TURN THESE WORDS RIGHT BACK AT YOU.
WHAT?!
THIS IS A BATTLE BETWEEN SHINOBI.
TOWNSPEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF COULD DIE BY THE THOUSANDS WITHOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I CROSSED PATHS WITH SOMETHING SO POWERFUL
I DON'T THINK SHINOBI SKILL ALONE WILL BE ENOUGH TO DEFEAT IT
WAIT, JOUNO-SUKE!
BUT YOU CAN?
.....
.....

ii

HATTORI-SAMA.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

SHOULD THE SATSUMA SHINOBI CAPTURE YOU, OUR OWN PLANS WOULD BE JEOPARD-IZED.
THAT'S A RISK WE CANNOT TAKE.
IF YOU MEAN TO STAY IN EDO NO MATTER WHAT, I DO NOT HAVE A CHOICE.
I SHALL HAVE YOU RE-MAIN QUIETLY IN THE IGA CLAN'S MANSION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THIS MATTER IS SETTLED.
ARE YOU PLANNING TO DETAIN ME?

IF YOU ARE ONIWA-BAN, FOR MY PART I'M A DOORMAN.
I'LL PUT MY LIFE ON THE LINE IN ORDER TO ROOT OUT THE SAT-SUMA. JUST LIKE A SHINOBI READY TO FORFEIT HIS LIFE TO FULFILL A MISSION.
YOU DARE RESIST ME!!

WARRIOR OR CIVIL, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE WHEN IT COMES TO SUCH STRENGTH OF RESOLVE.

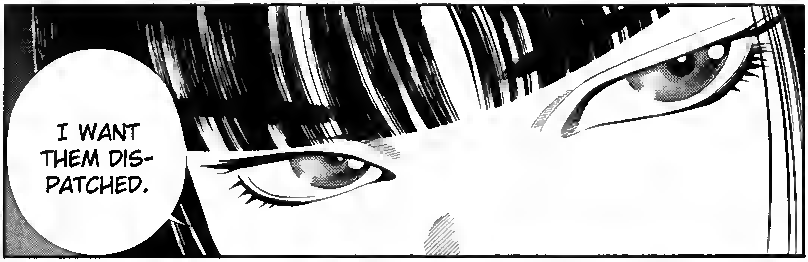
19TH TALE: END

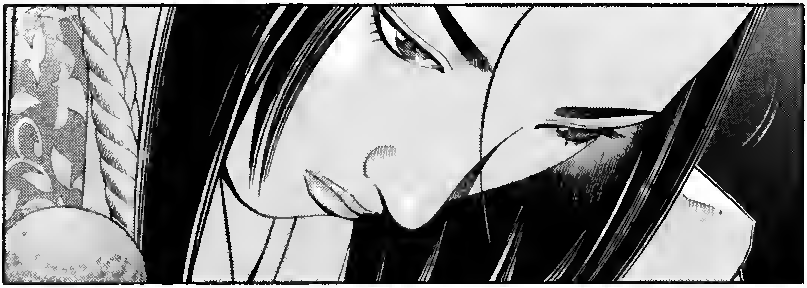
PESTIF-
EROUS
LOCK-
SMITH.
DAMN
YOU. HOW
DARE YOU
DO THIS
TO MY
HAND.

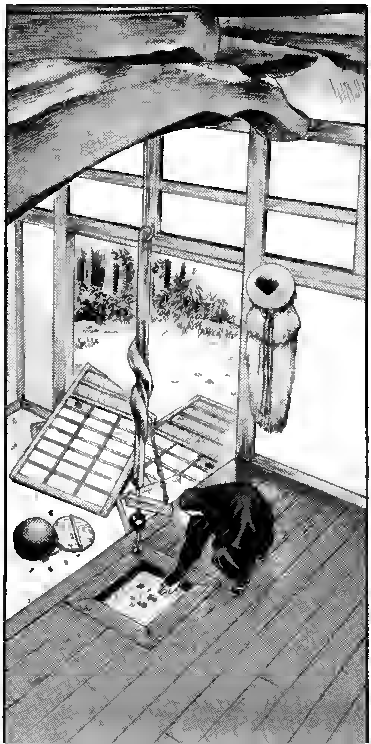
第20話
秘錠の密偵
7

NOTHING OF IMPORT-ANCE.
MY WOUND WAS HURT-ING, THAT'S ALL.
GA-HOUMARU-SAMA. IS ANYTHING WRONG?
WHAT WAS THAT VOICE ?
スルスル

!
OOOH. YOUR HAND!
GO AFTER THE LOCKSMITH AND HIS FRIENDS.
WELL, IT TOOK LONG ENOUGH.
WE DID GET THE KEY BACK, BUT THEY COULD BE A PROBLEM.
UKIHA.
YES SIR.


I WANT THEM DISPATCHED.





THEY HAVE STRANGE TECHNIQUES AT THEIR DISPOSAL.
BE CAREFUL.
UNDERSTOOD.

IT'S COLD.
.....
.....
THE FIRE HAS NOT BEEN LIT IN A WHILE.
NO TRACES OF HIM HAVING RETURNED.
HERE IS SOME CLAM SOUP.
WARM UP YOUR BODY SOME.
IT'S DELICIOUS.

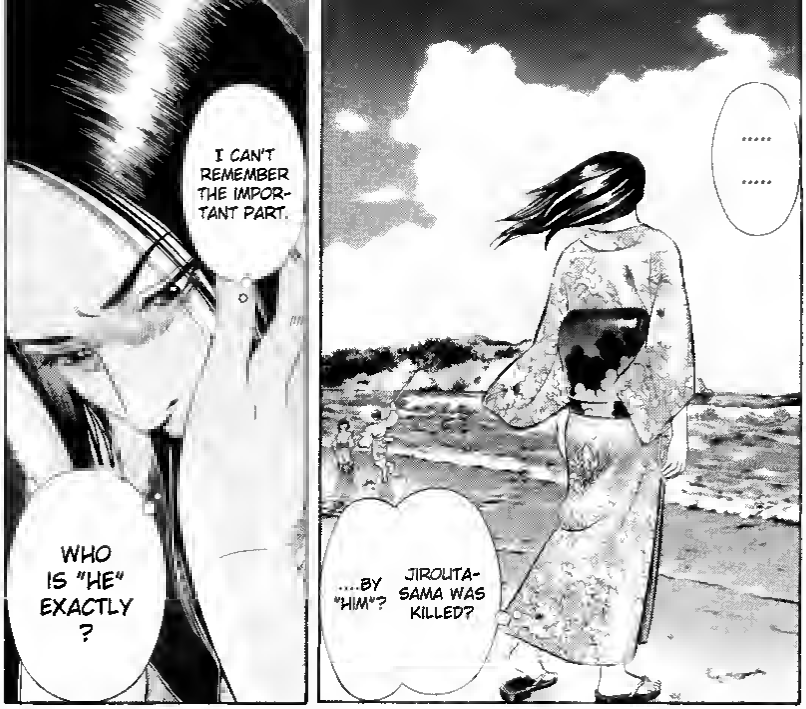
IF THEY HADN'T FOUND OUT ABOUT DAIMARU, THEY MIGHT'VE BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE UNSCATHED.
THEY WERE UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO RESCUE ME.

AH, MISS.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE ALRIGHT NOW.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?
I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND YOU LYING DOWN.
AND I TOLD MISTER TETSUJUU WHERE YOU WERE.
I SEE.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND HIM?
I DON'T.
キュッ
?
COME ON. OVER THERE.

HERE.
THIS IS WHERE WE FOUND YOU.
オオオオ!!

GET A-WAY, EVEN IF YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO MAKES IT!
IKIJI JUMP INTO THE SEA.
HERE.
YOU! TAKE CARE OF THIS!
"HE'S" COMING!
QUICK
JIROLITA-SAMA!

GASP!

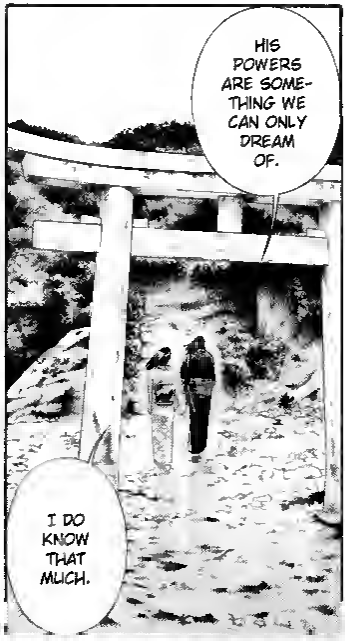

I CAN'T REMEMBER THE IMPORTANT PART.
WHO IS "HE" EXACTLY ?
.....
.....
JIROUTA-SAMA WAS KILLED?
....BY "HIM"?

UKIHA. FAILURE WON'T BE TOLERATED THIS TIME.
YES SIR..... BUT
IN CONFORMITY WITH YOUR RECKONING, THEY HAVE DISAPPEARED, AND BY THE LOOKS OF THINGS THEY HAVE NOT COME BACK.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN A FOOL'S ERRAND.
ISSHIN-SAMA.

AFRAID OF HIM .....
I'M AFRAID SOMETIMES, ISSHIN-SAMA.
GAHOUMA-RU-SAMA'S ORDERS ARE BEYOND QUE-STIONING.
WHAT IS IT?

HE HAS BEEN LEADING THE SATSUMA SHINOBI SINCE OUR YOUNG DAYS, YET HIS APPEAR-ANCE HASN'T CHANGED.
I ALSO HEARD HE WENT TO A SA-CRED MOUNTAIN, EXORCISED THE EVIL SPIRITS AND TOOK IN THEIR POWERS FOR HIMSELF.

BUT I'M HAVING MISGIVINGS ABOUT HIM, AT TIMES AS IF HE WAS A WRATHFUL MONSTER OF SORTS.
.....
.....


HIS POWERS ARE SOMETHING WE CAN ONLY DREAM OF.
I DO KNOW THAT MUCH.

AND NOW THAT WE'RE CLOSER TO EDO, I HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING THOSE MOMENTS OF APPREHENSION EVEN MORE OFTEN.

UKIHA
NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR UNNECESSARY PONDERING.
JUST A LITTLE EFFORT, AND OUR OLD WISH OF INFILTRATING EDO CASTLE WILL COME TRUE.

JIROUTA-SAMA DID?

THIS IS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT MY BROTHER JIROUTA USED TO SAY.
.....MY BROTHER.

IT IS CRUCIAL FOR US SATSUMA SHINOBI TO UNCOVER THE SECRETS OF THE EDO CASTLE IF WE ARE TO STRIKE AT THE HEART OF THE SHOGUNATE SOMEDAY!
WE NEED HIM IF WE ARE TO REACH THE UPPER STRATUM OF THE SHOGUNATE.
JOUNOSUKE!
WE WON'T LET YOU GET INTO THE CASTLE.
WHAT?!
カラ
カラ
!

SO IT WAS YOU, MONGREL!
LET ME TELL YOU THIS. YOUR LEADER IS A DEMON.
YOU CAN'T TAKE ORDERS FROM SOMEONE LIKE THAT.

EDO CASTLE IS A CORNERSTONE TO THE SEAL AGAINST EDO'S DEMONS.
IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THE CITY WILL BE DESTROYED.

PLEASE JUST GO AWAY QUIETLY.
NO. THIS COUNTRY WHENCE THE SUN RISES INTO A LAND OF DEMONS
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TURN EDO.
SENSE-LESS BABBLE !!
WAIT!

ピロリ
A MILLION OF PEOPLE LIVE HERE IN EDO.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT SATSUMA SHINOBI OR WHATEVER YOU ARE. BUT IF YOU PLAN ON DESTROYING EDO
I WILL PUT MY LIFE ON THE LINE TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T HAPPEN.
TET-
SUJUU
.....

!
BECAUSE WE ARE DOORMEN, AND THIS IS OUR JOB.

オオオオー!

DOOR-MEN?
WHO THE BLOODY HELL ARE THEY?
20TH TALE: END

第21話◎秘銃の密偵 8
トオオオー！

LET'S GO, TETSUJUU !!
WAIT!

!
ニャキ
ニャキ

TN: IN JAPANESE, "JOU" NO JI. THIS IS A REFERENCE TO JOUNOSUKE'S NAME, AS THE "JOU" PART IS INDEED WRITTEN WITH THE KANJI FOR "LOCK"

ドコオ。

ドス
ドス
ドス
URGH.
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, TETSU-JUU?!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY, LOOK.
!

.....
.....
THEY'VE BLOCKED OFF OUR ESCAPE ROUTE.
BE SURE TO TAKE THEM DOWN WITH YOUR NEXT ATTACK.
BOMBING MASTER UKIHA.

PREPARE YOURSELF, JOUNO-SUKE.
I WILL EXACT REVENGE FOR KYOU-ZOU!
THAT IS NOT QUITE HOW IT HAP-PENED.
YOUR KYOUZOU HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A DEMON
BY THE VERY LEADER YOU PEOPLE TRUST SO MUCH.
KYOU-ZOU? A DEMON ?
YOU MUST BE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
SO I HAD TO SEAL HIM AWAY.

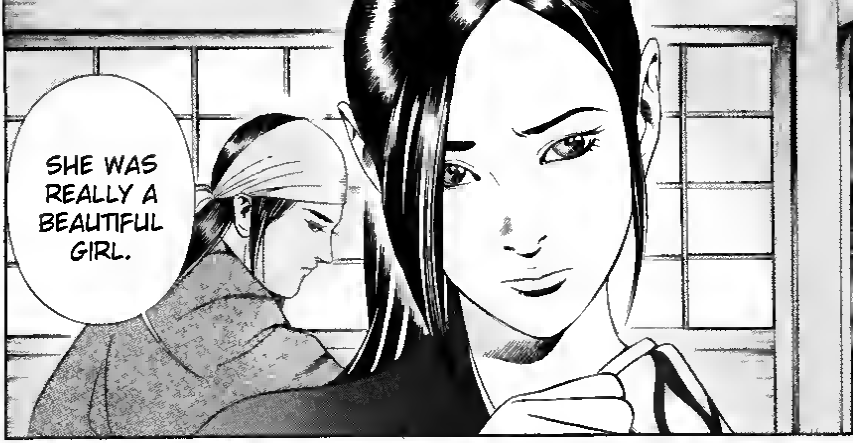
EVEN IF THEY ARE SATSUMA SHINOBI.
WE ONLY FIGHT DEMONS.
AND WE HAVE NO WISH TO BATTLE AGAINST HUMAN BEINGS.

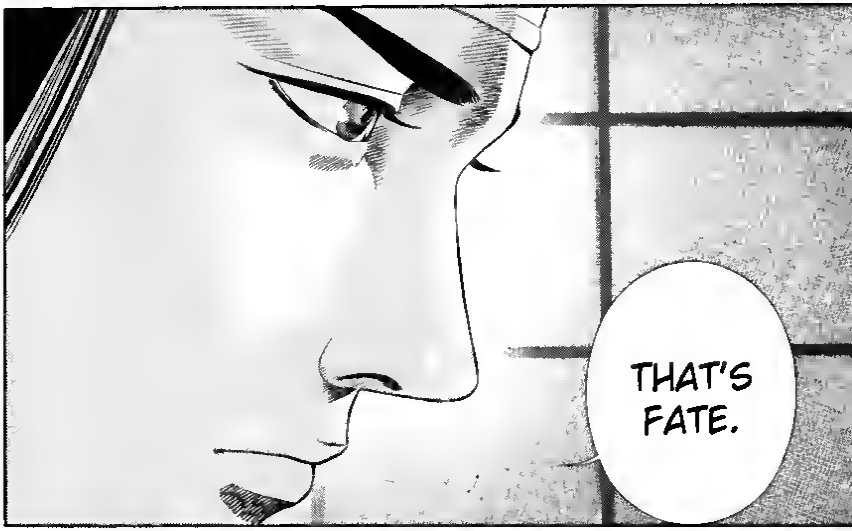
IT'S TOO LATE. FOR EVERY-THING!
ピー!
BOL-LOCKS !!
.....
.....
キュ!
コク
THINK YOU CAN JUMP, TETSU-JUU?

YOU WON'T GET AWAY !!
キュー!
キ
ニャー!
ニャー
ヒュオ
ヒー!
ヒーヒー!

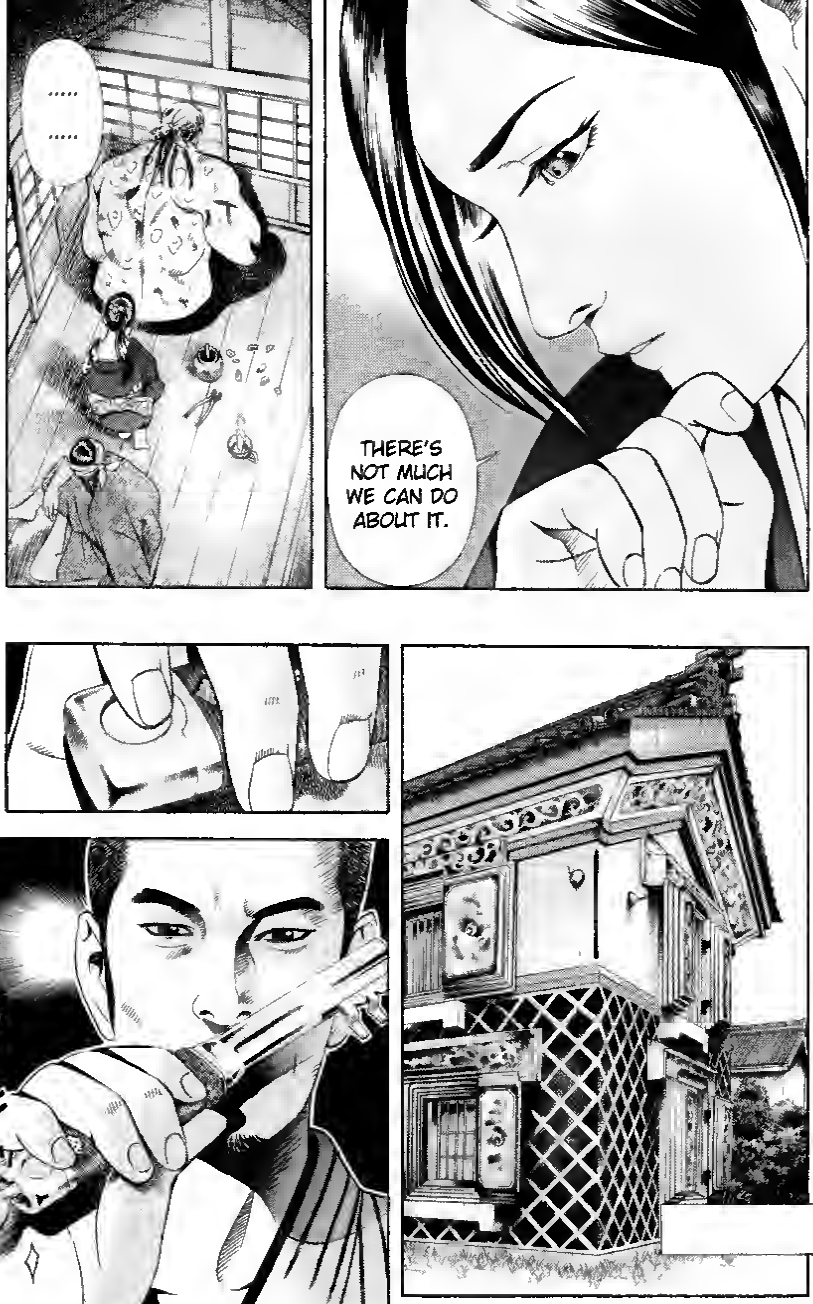
DID YOU GET THEM?
I DON'T KNOW.
.....
.....
ズボ"
OOOOW

O-KIN.
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, CAN'T YOU BE A LITTLE GENTLER ABOUT IT?!
COME ON.
DO YOU THINK IT'S EASY?
IF I HADN'T SAVED YOU, YOU'D BE FISH FOOD RIGHT NOW, TETSU-SAN.
THAT'S BECAUSE OF THE GIRL. SHE IS A BLASTED BOMB SLINGER.
JUMPING OFF THE CLIFF IS EXACTLY WHAT SAVED US
BUT TO THINK SHE WAS REALLY A SHINOBI
SHE REALLY DIDN'T LOOK THE PART
COME TO THINK OF IT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME
BUT SHE WAS .....

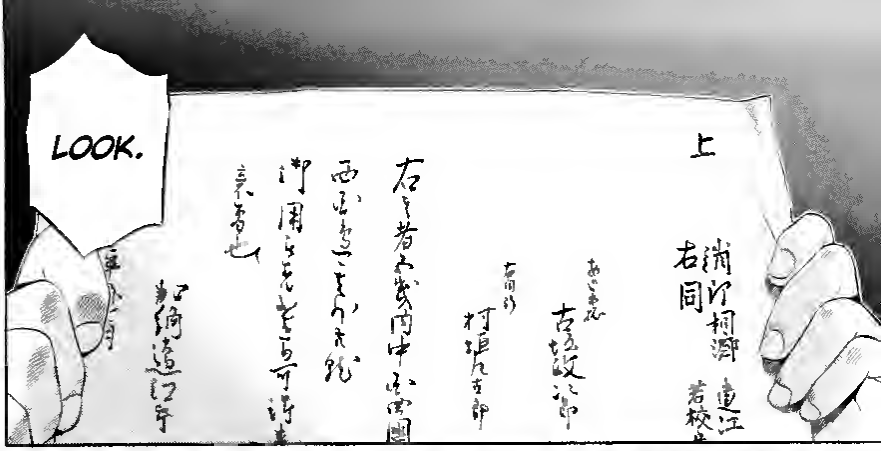

SHE WAS REALLY A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.


THAT'S FATE.

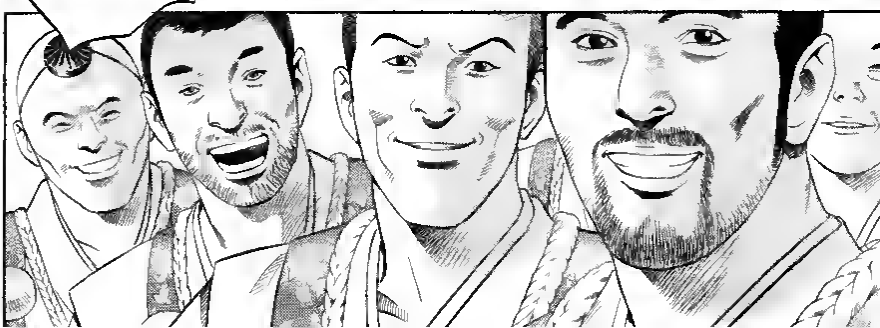
.....
.....


.....
.....
THERE'S NOT MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

キーイイ
.....
.....
THIS MUST BE IT!


LOOK.

WITH THIS SCRAP OF PAPER, WE CAN INFIL-TRATE EDO CASTLE.



AND OUR OLD AMBITION SHALL BE FULFILED !!
THE DAY THE SAT-SUMA CAN INVADE EDO IS CLOSE AT HAND!
YEEAAAHH
ﾘﾝ
SI-LENCE !!
.....
.....

WE HAVE BEEN FOL-LOWED.

ALRIGHT, MEN. SMOKE THEM OUT. CUT OFF ALL OF THEIR ESCAPE ROUTES.
DON'T LET A SINGLE ONE OF THEM GET A-WAY!

IT ENDS HERE. SATSUMA SPIES.

21st TALE: END

第22話
秘錠の密偵 9

……
……

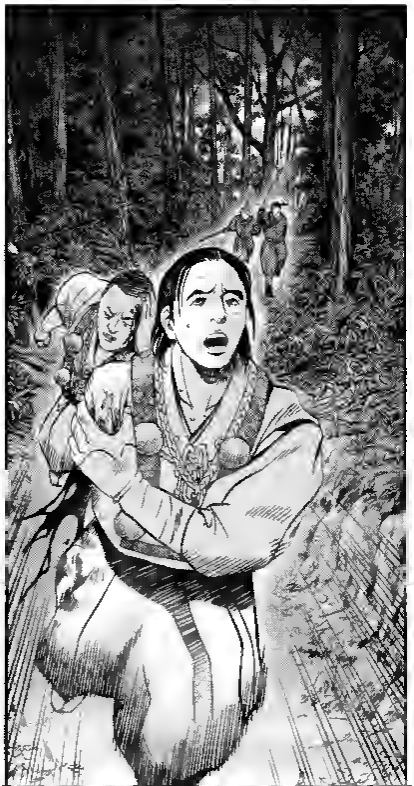
NO WAY!
CURSE THOSE SATSUMA SHINOBI. WHEN DO THEY PLAN ON GETTING OUT?
.....
.....
ガラ
ガラ
DON'T TELL ME THEY JUST MAGICKED THEIR WAY OUT.
THEY CAN'T HAVE !!

.....
.....
STAY FOCUSED.
DON'T SHOW ANY OPEN-INGS!

FROM BELOW !!
THEY'RE COMING OUT FROM UNDER-GROUND !!
!

RAAAAAH
WAAAAGH
SO THEY DUG A HOLE INTO THE GROUND!! CURSE THEM.

DO NOT FALTER.
CUT THEM DOWN TO THE LAST MAN!
キュー
OOOF



AAA-YYYE.

SHINJU-UROU-SAMA. THEY'RE GETTING AWAY.
AFTER THEM!

!
WHO'S THERE ?!

SEIJUU-ROU-SAMA. A WOMAN AND A CHILD HERE OF ALL PLACES.
HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THIS?
DO NOT LET YOUR GUARD DOWN!
THAT TODDLER IS THE HEAD OF THE SATSUMA SHINOBI HIM-SELF!
カラン

!!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WELL DONE, UKIHA.

.....
.....
SHIN-JUUROU !!
...I RECKON YOU'RE THAT MONGREL THEY CALL GAHOU-MARU.
I DID HEAR THE RUMORS ABOUT YOU, BUT I'M STILL SUR-PRISED.
YOU'RE REALLY A TODDLER
UKIHA!
IS GAHOU-MARU-SAMA AL-RIGHT?
ISSHIN. YOU ARRIVE JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME.
THE HEAD OF THE IGA CLAN HAS DECIDED TO SHOW HIMSELF.

IMPERSONATING AN ONIWABAN AND WORMING YOUR WAY INTO DAIMARU? CERTAINLY YOU WEREN'T EXPECTING YOUR UNDERLINGS TO GO UNNOTICED?
OH, YES?
YOU'RE QUITE SOMETHING.
BUT YOU DON'T BITE HARD ENOUGH.
IT HAPPENS TO BE A TRICK OF MINE.
THE MOMENT HE OPENED THE DOOR TO DAIMARU'S STOREROOM.
THAT SATSUMA SHINOBI BLEW HIS OWN COVER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AFTER THE NIGHT WHEN THAT GIRL DISAPPEARED FROM THE BLACKSMITH'S HOUSE WITHOUT A TRACE
WE PERFORMED A LITTLE SUBSTITUTION IN THE DAIMARU STOREHOUSE

ONLY ONE KEY COULD HAVE OPENED THE DOOR.
THE ONE YOU PEOPLE STOLE AWAY FROM JOUNOSUKE.

!

JOU-NOSUKE MADE IT.
BECAUSE WE KNEW YOU'D COME FOR IT EVENTUALLY.
SO WHAT OF THAT KEY?!

IS THAT SO?
SO THE WHOLE THING WAS YOUR I-DEA?
WHATEVER PLANS YOU HAD, THEY'VE FALLEN A-PART.
ACCEPT IT.

I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE ABOUT THAT.
?
PROVIDED I OBLITERATE THE IGA CLAN TO THE LAST MAN HERE AND NOW
ALL OF THOSE WHO KNOW ABOUT OUR SECRETS WILL BE GONE.

YOU STILL THINK OF YOURSELF AS THE VICTOR?
CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT'S AT YOUR FEET?
DON'T BE FOOLISH.
!

I WILL KILL EACH ONE OF YOU IN TURN
BE SURE TO WATCH YOUR COMRADES AS THEY DIE.
UHH.
GH ...
BLURGH

.....
.....
HATTORI SHINZOU.
YOU'LL BE THE LAST ONE TO GO.

!
YOU !!

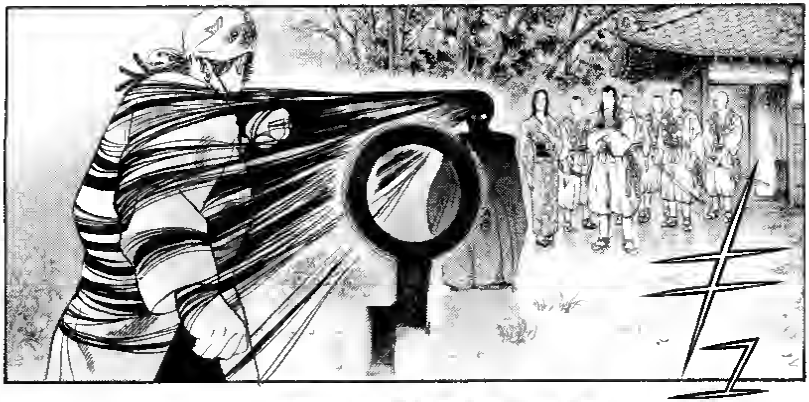
HATTORI-SAMA. I TOLD ABOUT IT, DIDN'T I?
HE IS NO COMMON SHINOBI.
JOU-NOSUKE !!!
22nd TALE: END

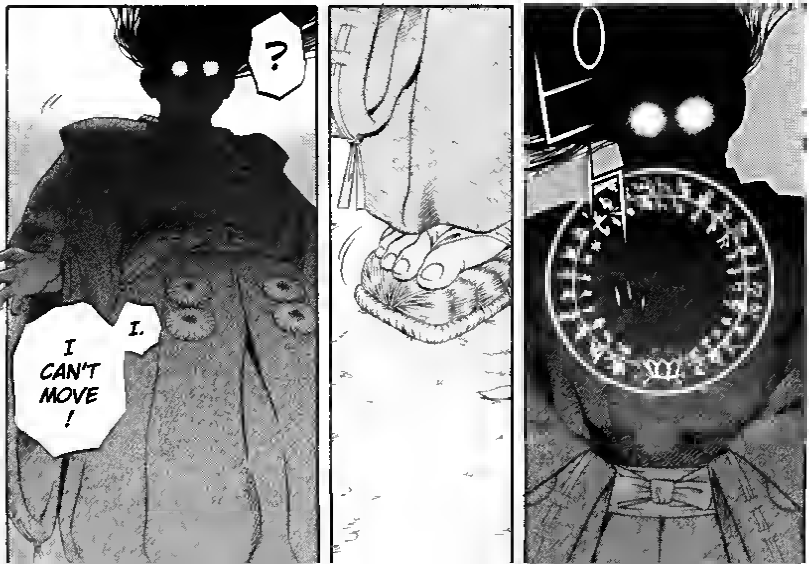
第23話◎秘錠の密偵10
YOU SHOW YOURSELF, LOCKSMITH!

ズルッ
!

TET-
SUJUU
!!
JOUNOSUKE, YOU CONCEN-TRATE ON THE DOORING.
DAMN YOU!
I'LL RIP YOU INTO A MILLION PIECES, DOG.

ARE YOU AL-RIGHT ?
SORRY.
I'LL BE FINE.
JUST STUFF HIM INTO THAT LOCK AL-READY!




?
I.
I CAN'T MOVE !

WHO THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU?
AN IMPERIAL AGENT?!
GAHOU-MARU.
I'VE SEALED AWAY YOUR ABILITY TO MOVE.
IS THAT ANOTHER SHINOBI TRICK?!
LOCK-SMITH.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I AM NOTHING LIKE AN IMPERIAL AGENT OR A WARRIOR.
I'M A DOOR-MAN.
A DOOR-MAN ...?
?

ISSHIN!
PRE-
PARE
YOUR-
SELF.
I'M GOING
TO SEAL AWAY
THE EVIL POWER
THAT'S NESTED
INTO YOU.
KILL
THE LOCK-
SMITH.
DON'T LET
HIM USE
HIS TECH-
NIQUES!

DON'T MOVE!

HAT-TORIII.
DRAW BACK YOUR SWORDS!
FAIL TO DO SO AND I KILL HIM!
!!
DOOR-MAN.
LET'S SEE YOU WORK.

HEART, TECHNIQUE AND PHY-SIQUE.
SHINOBI SURPASS THE COMMON FOLK IN EVERY-THING.
DO YOU THINK THE LIKES OF YOU AND YOUR TECHNIQUES CAN GET THE BETTER OF GAHOUMARU ?!

GAHOU-
MARU-
SAMA!

WHAT'S THAT?!

OOOH. WHAT SPLEN-DOR.
IT IS.
IS THAT GAHOU-MARU-SAMA?
THIS IS THE POWER WITH WHICH HE EX-ORCISED THOSE EVIL SPIRITS ON THE SACRED MOUNTAIN.

AAAAARGH
!

ミチ
ミチ
ミチ
グル！
！

AAAAAAAAH

UGH
UKIHA. GET A GRIP ON YOUR-SELF.
MY.
MY HEAD ...

UKIHA.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TAKE IT AL-READY !!
COME ON!
.....
.....
TELL MY BROTHER THIS.
GAHOU-MARU DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE SHOGUNATE OR THE SATSUMA. HE'S JUST A MONSTROUS BEAST WITH A THIRST FOR HUMAN BLOOD.

I'M... COUNTING ON..... YOU.
JI-ROUTA-SAMA !!
ISSHIN-SAMA.
I RE-MEMBER NOW!

HE'S THE ONE WHO DEVOURED JIROUTA-SAMA.
THAT BEAST OVER THERE !!
THA
GAHOU-MARU!
HUMPH.
I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU WERE GO-ING TO SAY
IT'S THE TRUTH.
HE ATE HIM BE-FORE MY EYES.
IT HAPPENED JUST LIKE IT IS NOW.
GAHOUMA-RU DOES NOT CARE ABOUT THE SHOGUNATE OR THE SATSUMA.
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
HE'S JUST A MONSTROUS BEAST WITH A THIRST FOR HUMAN BLOOD.
THAT'S WHAT JIROUTA-SAMA TOLD ME!
HE'S OUR LEADER, RE-MEMBER?

WAAAAAH

TN: IT GET'S LOST IN THE TRANSLATION' BUT ISSHIN'S SPEECH SWITCHES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN RESPECTFUL AND DISCOURTEOUS, SHOWING HIS CONFUSION

23rd TALE: END

第24話◎秘錠の密偵11

HE
...
HEEELP!
?!

HIC
TETSU-
JUU!
!

I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU.
WHY?

GASP
I'M FINE.
SORRY.

HHHHH

THAT THING IS TOUGH AS HELL!
.....
.....
!!
BLAST IT.

USE THE BOMB-SHELLS IN MY SLEEVES !!
TAKE OFF THE PINS AND THROW THEM AT HIM!

ドオオオ!!
ドド!!
ズルッ!!
ボ!
OW !!

ARE YOU AL-RIGHT ?
.....
.....

THERE YOU ARE.
ガッ!

YOU AGAIN !!
!
JOUNO-SUKE.

I WILL NOT LET YOU KILL ANYBODY ELSE.
BOLLOCKS!
GAHOUMARU. THIS TIME FOR SURE, I'M GOING TO LOCK YOU AWAY.

THIS IS WHAT OUR JOB AS DOORMEN CONSISTS OF.
SEALING EVIL INTO A LOCK.
WHAT'S THAT?
YOUR LEADER WAS A DEMON, WHICH SHOULD BE CLEARLY APPARENT BY NOW.
.....
.....

!
スス…
HOW MUCH MORE EVIL IS HE HOSTING INSIDE HIM-SELF?

THIS IS BAD.
THE LOCK IS FILLING BEYOND CAPACITY.

JOLINO-SUKE?
.....WHERE ARE YOU?

JOU-NOSUKE .....
THE EVIL-SEALING LOCK, GONE. IT CAN'T BE.
!

I TOLD YOU SO.
THE LIKES OF YOU AND YOUR TECHNIQUES CAN'T GET THE BETTER OF GAHOUMARU.
I RECKON THAT WOUNDED AS YOU ARE YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO MOVE
.....
.....
DIIIE !!!

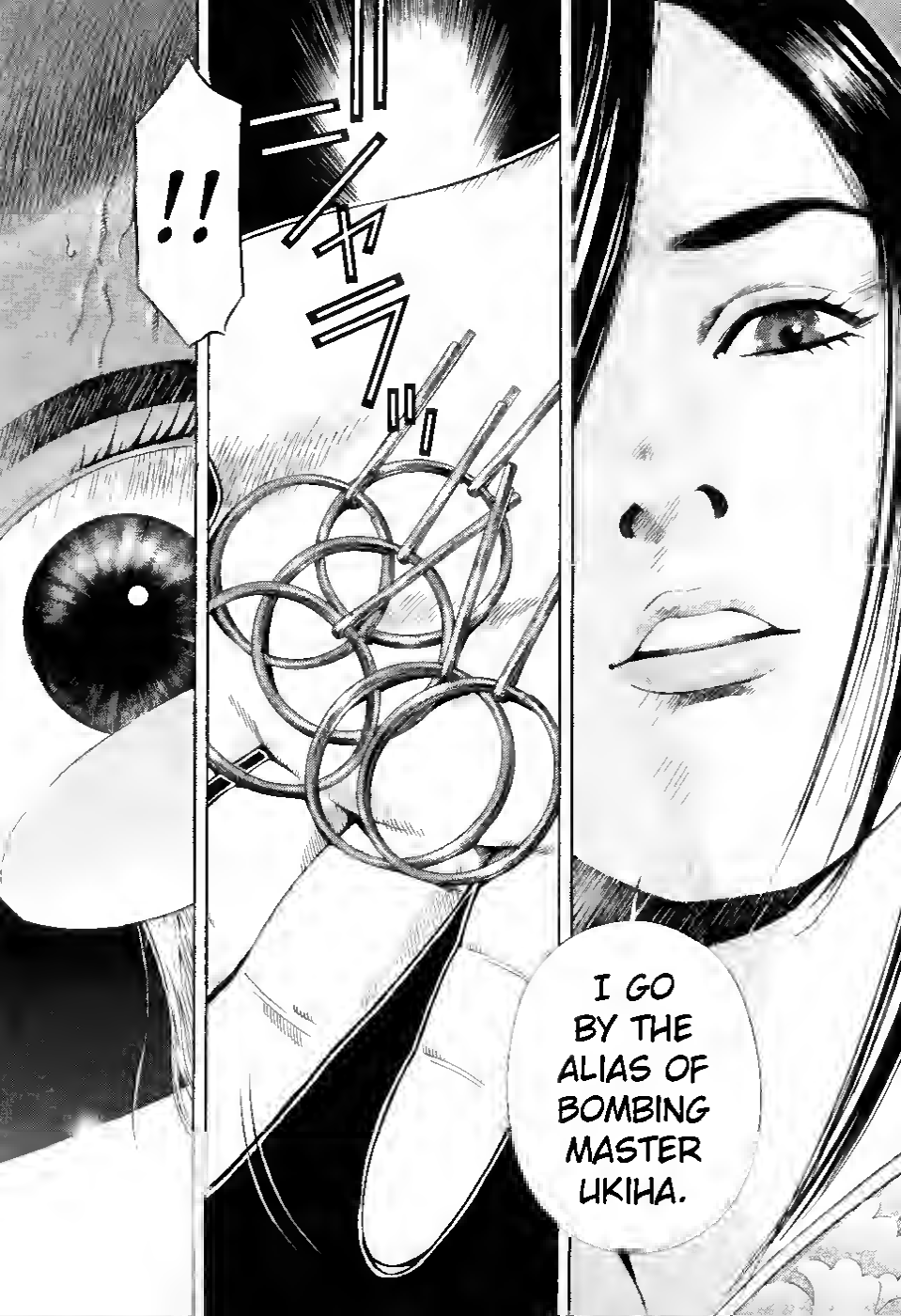
LET ME GO.
LET GO OF ME, WILL YOU!
I DONE TAKING ORDERS FROM YOU.
NOT AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO JIROUTA-SAMA!

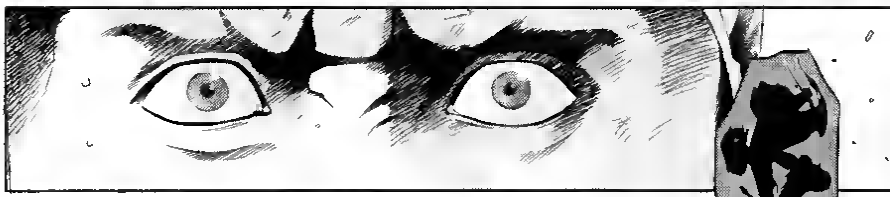
TETSU-JUU. TAKE JOUNOSUKE-SAN AWAY, QUICK!

SO YOU WERE THERE, AFTER ALL.
A BEAST LIKE YOU IS NO LEADER OF MINE. YOU ARE NOTHING.
JIROUTA WAS MAKING WAY TO THE PROVINCE WITH THE KEY, AND ABOUT TO REVEAL MY TRUE IDENTITY.
I HAD TO DISPOSE OF HIM
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THAT.

PREPOS-TEROUS.
EVEN IN THIS STATE,
GAHOUMA-RU CANNOT BE KILLED BY AN ANT LIKE YOU

HAVE YOU FOR-GOTTEN ?!
?


!!
I GO BY THE ALIAS OF BOMBING MASTER UKIHA.



YAMIKAGISHI 3: END

漫画家とはヘソ曲がりなもので、右と言えば左、左と言われれば「どうだ」と言わんばかりに上を向く、とにかく患っている人種なのだ。

仕事においては、まずキャラ設定からムクムクとその病気が頭をもたげる。

僕の「勇午」という作品に登場する「小暮」というキャラは、当初の設定では定年退職した老人だったり、「北島」女史は橋田壽賀子ばりの作家だったりする。

ただ、何でもかんでも逆のアプローチが成功するとはかぎらない。

やはり正攻法が一番ということがある。

この「闇鍵師」の鉄拾がそれにあたる。

最初に鉄拾のキャラ出しをしたのは、まだ二話目も完成していない時で、いずれ出てくる錠之介の相棒、魔封錠をつくる鍛冶屋、ということだった。

僕自身は、「ガッチャマン」における「コンドルのジョー」的キャラを考えていたのだが、

中島氏曰く「巨大なくわを浜に振りおろして、しじみを獲り、メシはおひつごと豪快に喰うような巨漢をイメージして欲しい」と、身振り手振りで説明していただいた。

その瞬間、真逆のアプローチではなく、正攻法にうわのせしていく形でインスピレーションが湧いて来た。

そして出来たのが今の鉄拾だ。

『うわのせ』……とはサイズ。

もちろん演出上ではあるが、これって十数メートルはあるよねってコマがあるよね

……人間なのにね。

赤名 修

大活劇である。
今巻、赤名 修氏がこれほどのスペクタクルシーンを描こうとは、
原作を渡した僕ですら想像できなかった。
いや、これは嬉しい誤算だ。
今エピソード最大の敵である牙鳳丸の元になったのは、お分かりの方もいるだろうが、
コミックス第一巻のカバーイラストのキャラクターである。
赤名さんがオリジナルで描いたものだったが、あまりに素晴らしい出来だったので、
初期の最大の敵として使わせていただくことにした。
赤名さんは多分女性の魔物と考えたのだろうが、
そこはあえて誤読して女のように美しい少年と設定した。
その時には『秘錠の密偵』の大筋の話は出来ていたので、更に捻って、
童に見えるが実は年齢不詳の薩摩忍びの頭領（しかも魔に憑かれた）と
どんどんキャラは膨らんでいった。
そうして出来た原作を、赤名さんは更に膨らませて、今回の大活劇となった。
『闇鍵師』はこういう世界もありなのだ。
ここから先どこまで行けるか、ますます楽しみになってきた。

中島かずき

ACTION COMICS
閃鍵師❸
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OFFTOPIA
SCAN BY UNOK
TRANSLATION
BY GOTTHEIM
CLEANING BY
MIEZE
TYPESETTING BY
FEANOR